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BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

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Message of the Holy Father to the Fondazione Memorie Audiovisive del Cattolicesimo (MAC) (Audiovisual Memories of Catholicism Foundation), on the occasion of its founding

The following is the Message sent by the Holy Father Francis to the *Fondazione Memorie Audiovisive del Cattolicesimo* (MAC) (Audiovisual Memories of Catholicism Foundation), on the occasion of its founding:

Message of the Holy Father

To the President and members of the Board of Directors and of the Scientific Committee of the Audiovisual Memories of Catholicism Foundation,

On the occasion of its establishment, I would like to extend my paternal good wishes and warm encouragement to the members of the Audiovisual Memories of Catholicism Foundation, its President, Board of Directors and Scientific Committee.

The objectives that your Foundation intends to pursue respond to a real cultural urgency for the entire Church. Recently, in the interview granted to Msgr. Viganò for his book *Lo sguardo porta del cuore*, I insisted on the importance of greater commitment on the part of the entire ecclesial community, and in particular the Holy See, to the stewardship of our “memory for images”. Besides, audiovisual sources have become historical traces central to our recent past: “We live in the time of the image”, I say in the interview, “and this type of document has by now become our history, and will continue to do so, a permanent complement to written documentation. In addition, they are documents of an intrinsically universal nature because they transcend linguistic and cultural boundaries, and they can be understood with immediacy by everyone”. At the same time, I underlined that, despite being a recent form of heritage, these sources are a fragile asset that require constant care: the Catholic Church has already unfortunately lost a major part of the audiovisual documentation that recounts her nineteenth and twentieth century history, as a result of neglect and a lack of resources and skills.

For these reasons, I warmly welcome the birth of a Foundation such as yours, whose main purpose is the recovery, preservation and valorization of the historical audiovisual and related documentary heritage relating to

Catholicism. It seems significant to me that your institution, thanks to the involvement of the most important archival, film archiving and academic institutions, proposes a vision and a method based on the sharing of heritage and the highest skills and resources at the service of the transmission of the audiovisual memory of Catholicism. Such a horizon can signal a direction for the entire Church. Following in the footsteps of my Predecessors, who showed a “most vigilant care” in “conserving and handing down to future generations the memory of the Pontificate and the work of the Holy See” (John Paul II, Motu proprio *La cura vigilantissima*), I imagined a path that could soon lead to the birth of an institution that “functions as a Central Archive for the permanent and ordered conservation, according to scientific criteria, of the audiovisual archives of the bodies of the Holy See and the universal Church” (*Lo sguardo porta del cuore*, p. 20).

It seems important to me, therefore, to grasp these connections as well as, finally, to emphasize that the launching of your work takes place against the backdrop of an important anniversary, the sixtieth anniversary of the approval of the Conciliar Decree *Inter Mirifica*, which includes among God's wonderful gifts the instruments of social communication, including, therefore, the audiovisual media. As I pointed out in my Message for the thirtieth anniversary of the establishment of the Vatican Television Centre, “the Council Fathers’ words seem prophetic to us now; they rightly stressed how important the use of these means is: ‘like salt and light, they will give savour to the earth and brighten the world’, spreading the light of Jesus Christ and contributing to the progress of all humanity”. Since then, the technology of audiovisual media has travelled at great speed, creating a quantity of sounds and images unimaginable a few years ago, documenting the history of the world and of the Church. Today, therefore, it is also time to stop to gather and protect this enormous audiovisual patrimony to embark on a new great process of building a collective memory.

May the Lord help you to realize your important objectives, thus enabling historians of the future to reread the most recent history of Catholicism in all its complexity. I bless you from my heart.

Vatican City, 3 March 2023

FRANCIS